

Message Text

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ACTION PM-03

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 EA-13 H-01 NSC-10 NSCE-00 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 IGA-01 AID-10 RSR-01 /065 W
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P 220400 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0989

JCS/ SECDEF PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY VIENTIENE

CINCPAC PRIORITY

COMUSSAG

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 PHNOM PENH 3807

LIMDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OREP (LOWENSTEIN, JAMES; MOOSE, RICHARD)

SUBJECT: STAFFDEL MOOSE/ LOWENSTEIN VISIT TO CAMBODIA

REF: A. PHNOM PENH 3014, B. STATE 050656, C. STATE 047561

1. SUMMARY: MESSRS, LOWENSTEIN AND MOOSE SPENT SEVEN DAYS AT PHNOM PENH, FROM APRIL 5 TO APRIL 11, TWO MORE THAN ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED. THEY HAD EXTENSIVE DISCUSSIONS WITH VARIOUS SECTIONS OF THE EMBASSY, WITH GKR POLITICAL AND MILITARY FIGURES, AND WITH THEIR OWN LOCAL CONTACTS. AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST SEEMED TO BE AMERICAN POLICY OPTIONS IN CAMBODIA, THE EXTENT AND NATURE OF U. S. AIR OPERATIONS, AND THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. THEIR ATTITUDE WAS PROBING AND OFTEN CRITICAL. END SUMMARY.

2. POLICY: MR. LOWENSTEIN AND MR. MOOSE DISCUSSED WITH THE AMBASSADOR POLICY OPTIONS FOR CAMBODIA, INCLUDING (A) CONTINUING WITH THE PRESENT HOLDING ACTION UNTIL NEGOTIATIONS ARE POSSIBLE, (B) GRADUAL MILITARY DISENGAGEMENT AND " LETTING
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NATURE TAKE ITS COURSE," AND (C) AN ESCALATION OF U. S. AND

ALLIED MILITARY INTERVENTION. THEY DID NOT TAKE PERSONAL POSITIONS FOR OR AGAINST THESE OPTIONS BUT APPEARED TO BELIEVE THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD FAVOR EITHER (A) OR (C).

3. THEY INQUIRED AS TO THE VIABILITY OF THE HOLDING ACTION. AMBASSADOR SWANK STATED THAT IT ULTIMATELY WILL DEPEND ON FANK' S STEADINESS ON THE BATTLEFIELD AND WILLINGNESS TO FIGHT. IF MARSHAL LON NOL SUCCEEDS IN BROADENING HIS GOVERNMENT, THIS COULD HELP SOME IN RE- ESTABLISHING A DEGREE OF POPULAR CONFIDENCE IN THE REPUBLIC, WHICH MIGHT THEN HOLD ITS OWN IN THE NEAR TERM PROVIDED OUR AIR SUPPORT AND MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS ARE CONTINUED AT ABOUT PRESENT LEVELS.

4. AMBASSADOR SWANK ADDED THAT WHILE HE HAD ANTICIPATED CONTINUING HOSTILITIES IN CAMBODIA FOLLOWING THE JANUARY 27 PARIS ACCORD, HE HAD NOT FORESEEN, NOR HAD ANYONE ELSE HERE, FIGHTING ON THE SCALE IT HAS BEEN WAGED BY THE KHMER INSURGENTS, WITH NVA/ VC LOGISTIC, ADVISORY AND INCREASINGLY DIRECT COMBAT SUPPORT, IN THE FEBRUARY- APRIL TIME FRAME. FANK HAS BEEN VERY HARD PRESSED. HE NOTED THAT AT THE REQUEST OF THE GKR WE HAD BEEN FORCED TO REVERSE OUR STAND- DOWN OF AIR COMBAT OPERATIONS IN CAMBODIA (JANUARY 28 TO FEBRUARY 29) IN RESPONSE TO THE INTENSIFIED ENEMY THREAT TO KOMPONG THOM AND TO ENEMY INTERDICTION OF ROUTES 1, 2, AND 3. THE AMBASSADOR STATED THAT WE WANT ABOVE ALL A CEASE FIRE IN CAMBODIA AND ARE PREPARED AGAIN TO STAND DOWN OUR AIR SUPPORT IF WE CAN ATTAIN ONE, TACITLY OR THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS.

5. CONCERNING THE LATTER, THE AMBASSADOR ATTRIBUTED THE INTRANSIGENCE OF THE OTHER SIDE TO ITS POSSIBLE ASSESSMENT OF GROWING GKR WEAKNESS, TO ITS DESIRE TO SUSTAIN THE MOMENTUM OF ITS MILITARY SUCCESSES, AND TO HANOI' S PROBABLY FUNDAMENTAL DISINTEREST IN A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT IN CAMBODIA ON OTHER THAN ITS OWN TERMS. WITHOUT HANOI' S ACQUIESCENCE, AND THAT OF PEKING, TALKS BETWEEN THE GKR

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AND GRUNK/ FANK ON A CEASE FIRE OF A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT

ARE UNLIKELY TO GET UNDERWAY. NEITHER HANOI OR PEKING SEEMS PRESENTLY DISPOSED TO ASSIST IN BRINGING THE FIGHTING TO AN END IN CAMBODIA, AND MOSCOW IS RETICENT ON THE SUBJECT. THUS THE PROSPECT FOR EARLY NEGOTIATIONS IS VERY BLEAK.

6. POLITICAL: MESSRS. LOWENSTEIN AND MOOSE ASKED FOR AND RECEIVED A DETAILED BRIEFING ON THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE GKR OVER THE PAST YEAR. THEY DISPLAYED CONSIDERABLE CURIOSITY ABOUT THE PERSONALITY AND IDEAS OF MARSHAL LON NOL AND ABOUT THE ROLE OF THE MARSHAL'S BROTHER, BG LON NON. THEY EXPLORED ALL ASPECTS OF THE THAI PRESENCE IN CAMBODIA AND WERE TOLD IN ANSWER TO A SPECIFIC QUESTION THAT THE EMBASSY KNOWS OF NO PLANS TO EMPLOY THAI SGU'S IN CAMBODIA. THEY ALSO INQUIRED ABOUT THE KHMER PRESENCE AND ACTIVITIES ON KHONG ISLAND IN SOUTHERN LAOS. UPON A SPECIFIC QUERY, THEY WERE TOLD THAT THE SMALL KHMER UNIT

THERE IS DIRECTLY UNDER FANK, IS NOT CONNECTED WITH BRIGADIER GENERAL LON NON, AND TO OUR KNOWLEDGE DOES NOT OPERATE NORTH OF KHONG ISLAND.

7. MILITARY SITUATION: AT THEIR REQUEST THE DEFENSE ATTACHE OFFICE BRIEFED THE STAFFDEL ON THE GENERAL MILITARY SITUATION, FANK STRENGTH, ENEMY STRENGTH, LOSSES ON BOTH

SIDES, FRIENDLY DISPOSITIONS, AND THE KHMER INSURGENTS. DISCUSSIONS WITH THE STAFFDEL ON AIR OPERATIONS IN CAMBODIA AND THE EMBASSY ROLE IN THEM HAVE BEEN COVERED IN SEPARATE MESSAGES.

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FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0990

JCS/ SECDEF PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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LIMDIS

8. MILITARY ASSISTANCE: AS REGARDS MEDTC OPERATIONS, THE STAFFDEL SHOWED INTEREST IN THE FY 72 SHORTFALL, THE PROPORTIONS OF INVESTMENT TO OPERATION- AND- MAINTENANCE WITHIN THE MAP, THE FY 74 PROGRAM IN GENERAL TERMS, THE SOURCE OF FUNDS FOR AND MAGNITUDE OF AIR DELIVERY AND AIRDROP MISSIONS, EXTENT OF ON- HAND SUPPLIES OF FUEL AND AMMUNITION, FANK MANAGEMENT, END- ITEM CHECKING, THE AU-24 PROGRAM, THE EFFECTS OF A CEASEFIRE ON MEDTC ORGANIZATION, AND MAJOR ITEMS OF MAP EQUIPMENT IN FY 73. THEY ALSO QUERIED MEDTC PERSONNEL ON SUPPORT FROM THAILAND, OTHER THIRD- COUNTRY ASSISTANCE, FANK MORALE, TROOP STRENGTHS AND PAYROLL PADDING, THE ROLE OF BG LON NON' S THREE BRIGADES, THE NUMBER OF ACTIVE DUTY GENERALS, AND POSSIBLE SOURCES OF EXTRA INCOME OF FANK OFFICER.

9. ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE: THE STAFFDEL WERE BRIEFED ON THE ECONOMIC AND AID PROGRAMS AND REQUESTED INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTS INCLUDING COPIES OF PROJECT AGREEMENTS DEALING WITH THE USE OF COUNTERPART, AND DATA ON FOREIGN EXCHANGE, MILITARY PAY, POL STOCKS, THE PRICE SITUATION, AND THE REFUGEE REPORT.

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10. OUTSIDE CONTACTS: THE STAFFDEL REQUESTED AND RECEIVED APPOINTMENTS WITH UN SIM, IN TAM, SIRIK MATAK AND GENERAL SAK SUTSAKHAN. EMBASSY OFFICERS WERE NOT PRESENT DURING THESE INTERVIEWS. IN ADDITION THEY ARE KNOWN TO HAVE TOUCHED BASE WITH SOME OF THEIR OWN LOCAL CONTACTS, INCLUDING EMPLOYEES OF SHIPPING COMPANIES, AND WITH THIRD COUNTRY AND U. S. NEWSPAPER CORRESPONDENTS.

11. FURTHER DETAILS AND COPIES OF DOCUMENTS PROVIDED WILL BE POUCHED TO THE DEPARTMENT.

SWANK

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*** Current Classification *** SECRET

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